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ABSTRACT

This study investigates factors influencing participation of Afro-American female adolescents in sports. Following a review of the literature, two topics are addressed. The first of these, "Behavior in Sport," discusses benefits of sports to youth; stereotypes of Afro-American female sports participants; behaviors of female athletes; and the effects of motivation. The second topic, "Attitudes of Afro-Americans," focuses on adolescent problems, stereotypical ways of looking at Afro-American athletes, how Afro-Americans are socialized into sports, sexism, and racism. Two groups of Afro-American females were interviewed to determine linkages between attitudes towards sports participation and self-image. The girls expressed self-confidence in their ability to play the game, but demonstrated an absence of inner confidence. Results also suggest that Afro-American females regard success as always winning and being attractive to others. At the same time, they are faced with a discrepancy between what appears to be successful and what success really is. The girls' self-image appears to be derived from what those around them think, thereby relating participation to self-image. Eight tables are included. (Contains 25 references. (LL)

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TITLE:

WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCING SPORTS PARTICIPATION AMONG AFRO-AMERICAN FEMALE ADOLESCENTS

BY

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INTRODUCTION

As a researcher in Sports Psychology, it is my duty to attempt to make new discoveries, and try to make some type of predictions from that discovery. In the area of participation among Afro-American females there has been very little research conducted. As an Afro-American female studying behavioral science, it is my duty to attempt to answer questions about this population which has gone unnoticed for several years.

IMPLICATIONS AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to do descriptive research of the attitudes, behaviors, and other factors which influence Afro American female adolescent participation in sports. For the purpose of this study all findings, methods, subjects, inferences, assumptions and information, will be pertaining to Minneapolis, Minnesota's Central Neighborhood Community (CNC). The CNC is located in south urban section of Minneapolis.

This study was undertaken due to several factors. The three main factors are:

1) The increasing number of questions directed towards this researcher from surrounding educators as to the absences of Afro-American females involved in sports.

2) The statistical findings made in observation of Afro-American females in sports in this area.

3) The Washington D.C. Consortium's request for information about studies conducted on adolescent Afro-American females.

This study is a pilot study that will be described in detail in the methods section. The study will use traditional research which has been used to study the Afro-American male, white male, and female populations while neglecting the Afro-American female athlete population.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

1. THERE WAS NO CONTROL OVER ANY PREVIOUS ACQUAINTANCES THAT THE RESEARCHER HAD WITH THE SUBJECTS.

2. THERE WAS NO CONTROL FOR THE DIFFERENT AMOUNT OF PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCE THE SUBJECTS HAD OR DID NOT HAVE AS A SPORTS PARTICIPANT.

3. BECAUSE THIS STUDY IS CONCERNED ONLY WITH THE POPULATION SURROUNDING THE C.N.C. IT IS LIMITED TO THAT POPULATION AND IS CONDUCTED AS A PURPOSEFUL SAMPLE; IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO GENERALIZE TO THE GENERAL AFRO-AMERICAN FEMALE ADOLESCENT POPULATION.

BASIC ASSUMPTION

THE FOLLOWING BASIC ASSUMPTIONS APPLY TO THIS STUDY:

1 EACH SUBJECT WILL GIVE AN HONEST AND ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF THEMSELVES.

2. SUBJECTS WILL SPEAK FREELY ABOUT THERE OWN DOWNFALLS; SHORTCOMINGS, OR CELEBRATIONS WITHIN SPORTS AND NOT WITHHOLD VITAL INFORMATION FROM THE RESEARCHER FOR ANY REASON.

3. INTERPRETATION OF THE SUBJECTS' RESPONSES ARE PRESUMED TO BE AN ACCURATE PORTRAYAL OF THE SUBJECTS' OPINIONS. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SUBJECTS' RESPONSES HAS BEEN LEFT TO THE SUBJECTIVITY OF THE RESEARCHER'S DISCRETION.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

AFRO-AMERICAN FEMALES REPRESENTATION

Within urban Minneapolis, the statistical breakdown of the Afro-American female teen population shows a steady increase over the past 10 years. The period from 1970-1980 indicates a population increase among Afro-American female teens of **1,106** in 1970 to **1,418** in 1980 and at **2,754** in 1990. **(see Table I Minnesota Census Report))**

This accounts for more than **312 / 28.21%**, more Afro American female teens in this area over a 10 year period and **1,336/94.22%**, over a 20 year period.. The overall Afro-American population of Minneapolis has increased from 19,005 in 1970 to 28, 433 in 1980, and 47,948 in 1990 (Wee Table I). At the University of Minnesota, the same population increase can be seen. From 1974-1980 females accounted for 16,528 while Afro-Americans comprised a figure of **422**. The enrollment during 1980 of white females was 20,700 and there were **458** Afro-American females enrolled. In 1990, there were 14,021 white females, and **484** Afro American females; this is an increase of 26 more Afro-American females. **(see Table II, University of Minnesota Registrars Office Report)**

With this increase in the number of Afro-American female population at the University of Minnesota, we would expect to see some increase in the number of Afro American female athletes present. Some sports showed no increase at all over the previous years. Overall, the number of increase was grossly disproportionate to the overall Afro-American female population of the University. **(see Table III, University of Minnesota Sports Information Directors Office).**

This low participation rate is also prevalent at the adolescent age. Specifically, in the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), the situation is even more pronounced. From the researcher's observation during three summers of coaching in four different leagues with Afro-American female adolescents, there has been an obvious disproportionate representation. **(See Tabele IV AAU League)**

One should be concerned when one observes this obvious increase in the general population of this group in both places and the disproportionately low increase in the sports area. There is an increase represented in the general population and no increase represented in the sports population. One should begin to seek a rationale as to why this occurs. Here it would be beneficial to look at obstacles that may be factors in this situation. Such obstacles could be racial, sexual, their motivation, or just being an adolescent.

PART I BEHAVIOR IN SPORT

YOUTH BENEFIT FROM SPORTS PARTICIPATION

It is a well researched concept that physical activity enhances a person's well being. Few people would argue this point. Raglin (1990), reports that 20-40 minutes of aerobic **activity results in improvement in state anxiety and mood** which lasts for several hours. Reports like these support the notion that youth who participate in sports have a more positive attitude, do better in school work and tend to be more successful overall throughout life.

When one sees the reported benefits to youth in sports one must then seek to find other objective ways of analyzing this group participation. Although there are physical benefits for Afro-American females to participate, they are not well represented. Previous studies indicate females benefit from participation in sport . **This presumes there must be other factors which influence participation.**

The fact that they are **females** may be the reason why they do not participate. Does this physical benefit suggest that females who participate in sports have no other obstacles to overcome? If research shows that participation in sports would benefit Afro-American females, then why are they not participating? Hester (1990) reports "Top 10 reasons that Afro-American females participated in sports were "to improve skill", "to win", "to learn new skill", "for the rewards", and "to be popular". Perhaps the problem arises when Afro-American females display these **behavior, that participation itself becomes an obstacle. Being a participant may not be a benefit for AA females but rather an obstacle that hinders participation.**

STEREOTYPES OF (AFRO-AMERICAN) FEMALE SPORTS PARTICIPANTS

The belief that females, as well as males, would greatly benefit from participation in sports raises questions about stereotyping. A recent study conducted about college students' perception of females who participated in two sports supported the notion about stereotypes of females who participated in those two sports. The study showed that such things as "sports typing" as well as stereotyping occurred. **Some sports glorify and exaggerate the dimension of physicality/power far more than others. A central criterion often used to classify some sports as 'typical male" and others as "typically female" is the dimension of physicality. ....."Feminine" sport types are considered "lesser than" because they are less physical and thus less powerful and therefore less important than "masculine" sport types (Kane & Snyder ,1984)** . The two sports used in the study were with subjects who described basketball players and gymnasts. The male subjects consistently rated the basketball in "lesser than", smaller than, softer than, and in weaker terms than did females. These are typical obstacles and factors which would prevent or hinder females from participation. This is the stereotypical way in which female athletes have been perceived. Therefore, it perpetuates the notion of females as too weak, soft and not strong enough to participate in sports. This perception of females serves as yet another factor to negatively influence the participation rate of females.

BEHAVIORS OF AN ATHLETE WHO IS FEMALE

Being a female is not a separate concept from the concept of being a sports participant. When females do participate in sport it may be another obstacle simple because they **are** females and act as females. Females are often placed in the predicament of choosing to be either female **or** a sports participant (athlete). These females "act" as athletes, which is unlike how non-athlete females would act. Many programs in which female athletes participate are direct copies of male programs and thus are incapable of addressing the obstacle of being **FEMALE AND BEING AN ATHLETE.**

Blinde (1989) conducted a study of 482 former female athletes who participated in programs which emulated the male model. This male model means that the women's athletic programs are asked to take on the behavior, the priority, the format and the standards of male athletic programs.

As reported by Blinde (1989), not only do male-defined sport programs celebrate male values, but they subsequently **oppress the development and expression of those values more compatible with the experiences of females in the world**. Therefore, it is suggested that women's alienation in sport may be a function of both the celebration of male values and the suppression of values consistent with women's experiences. Female athletes who emulated the male model were **alienated from others due to their sports involvement** . This would suggest that being female and being an athlete are diabolically opposed. Therefore, female athletes will be alienated from other people due to their sports participation.

When we look at how girls perceive themselves, we may be able to understand and explain their behavior. In a study conducted with 7-12 year old girls being tested for body fat with skin calipers, several mentioned "I'm so fat", and "The coach calls me thunder thighs". This is clearly an expression of feelings of not measuring up to the standards. Ten to fourteen year olds sometimes seem so obsessed with how well they are doing in comparison to their teammates that their attention becomes off-task and their performance dwindles". It has been suggested that "this subthreshold feeling, sometimes perceived by the athlete yet as something she cannot quite articulate, may be similar to the now famous **'feminine mystique'** (Greendorfer 1981). Perhaps this feeling of feminine mystique can be described as a contributing factor as to why these female athletes feel left out, alienated, and confused. However, these findings were not compiled from a study involving a well represented Afro American adolescent female population.

Other researchers have addressed the issue by proposing that athletics drop the patriarchal ideology that characterizes the male model. This ideology lacking authentic meaning in women's lives,.....thus advocate that sport be redefined by women in such a manner so that it focuses upon the values and lived experiences of females. Perhaps in the past this is how the female athletes' behavior has been influenced by this male model. Now it should no longer be used to explain the female athletes behavior.

HOW MOTIVATION AFFECTS BEHAVIOR IN SPORTS

External motivation may be described as "encouragement or approval from someone the person values". Adolescents who would be involved in sports require more attention and approval from their significant friends, peers, and sometimes parents. Girls in the previously mentioned studies sought approval by comparing themselves with other girls. However, when this motivation is absent adolescents tend to discontinue their involvement in sports. There are certain changes that occur in sports due to motivation from the wrong source, and from using the wrong strategy. Girls need approval to stay motivated and involved in sports.

Exercise may be dependent upon other established habits that already have a high rate of occurrence (the Premack principle). Behavior can be altered so that adolescents feel they are enjoying something that they like. Motivation is most effective when the individual does not need coercion to participate. Dishman (1984) quotes Wankel & Thompson, by stating that, "one simple approach shown to directly and consistently enhance exercise behavior has included a rationale dicision-making procedure in which the person evaluates the costs and benefits he/she anticipates from participating in physical activity" (Wankel & Thompson 1977) (p. 427)

Last of all we know that youth like to feel that they are doing something for their own benefit. They like to play when they think they're good and have skills, not because they're lucky. To the young athlete it is imperative that they have fun. Several researchers have substantiated this fact. Anshel (1990) states their rewards for achieving competence are feelings of internal pleasure; it's fun, pleasurable, and satisfying.

PART II ATTITUDES OF AFRO-AMERICANS

PROBLEM WITH BEING ADOLESCENT

The adolescent stage is known to be the onset of "feelings of identity crisis". Adolescents have problems maintaining in school, experience peer pressure, and often are confused about their own identity. This has traditionally been the age when adolescents become interested in such things as the opposite sex or sports. They want to feel like they belong to something. This researcher would like to address the advantages gained from adolescent involvement in sports.

Deci (1975) states that the child's greatest potential for achieving in sport is dependent on his or her maturation level, prior experiences or learning, and motivation. Deci also predicts that the **two primary drives are to feel competent and to be self determining in coping and interacting with one's environment.** Adolescents need to feel competent and 'belong'. Sports may provided that solution, yet many adolescents are not involved. "Between the ages of twelve and seventeen years, about 80 percent of all children who are enrolled drop out of organized sport programs" (Harvey 1990).

Gould (1984) found that the primary reason for quitting was an overemphasis on winning. Some of the specific problems associated with such overemphasis are, comparative appraisal, lack of perceived ability, and low intrinsic motivation. One could argue that these obstacles hinder adolescents from participating in sports, whether Afro-American or not.

STEREOTYPICAL WAYS OF LOOKING AT AFRO-AMERICAN ATHLETES

Researchers continue to treat race as a variable rather than a relationship of power, and we have confined our attention exclusively to "Black" Afro American male athletes. Afro-American males were not allowed to play in the all white baseball league, then later were allowed. The Afro-American females were not allowed to participate in sports during the All American Girls' Professional Baseball League. Afro-American females have struggled for power in the sport arena just as Afro-American males have struggled. Often times in sports Afro-American females' attitudes are equated with those of Afro-America male athletes. Equating Afro-American females to Afro-American males has obliterated gender differences between the races. One can count on one hand the number of published analyses that specifically focus on women athletes of color . When we observe reports on the attitudes of Afro-American male athletes we see attitudes of being misunderstood, called lazy; the most popular study on Afro-American males refers to a phenomenon called stacking. When we observe the USA Today report on the myths of Afro-American athletes we may see some similarities between male/female attitudes. Yet, this article does not use Afro-American female as subjects in this study. **(see TABLE V, USA TODAY)**

The other opinion of AA female's attitudes in sports revolve around being sexualized. This issue is constantly being addressed by white feminist groups. Some AA females believe that these two groups have nothing in common. What white feminist have chosen to theorize makes no sense in terms of the racial experiences of women of color. Birrell (1987) states that AA females and white feminist both struggle to see equality of treatment and marginalization. The feminist arguments are suitable for the AA female athlete, they have both been an appendage to their male counterpart (p. 185-186).

What has been associated with AA athletes in general has come from extensive studies of AA males. U.S. A. Today reported that AA males in professional sports felt they were underrepresented because of their color. AA males reported that they were treated stereotypically in the report by USA Today. The article argued that AA males were treated in a lesser manner than the white males. In the same manner AA women have been treated stereotypically. In Birrell's article she argues that the AA female must struggle against the white feminist to erase the stereotypes. This view point, one of struggle, maybe argued the same for the **AA female athlete. However, the debate may not be just between white feminist and AA females but rather a joint effort for equality in sports for AA females collectively.** The issue is about feminist ideas and the ideas that the USA Today article made about stereotypes of AA males. However, for the AA female it is not just the white feminist ideas or just a racial issue which they must struggle against, it is a combination of both issues.

HOW AFRO AMERICANS ARE SOCIALIZED INTO SPORTS

Greendorfer and Ewing (1981), found that Blacks tend to have only black role models, and quite often black athletes play the same position as their heroes. Blacks tend to be influenced by a greater variety of significant others. Adult influences on black children declines throughout the early elementary school years while (influences) outside the family become more important. Different (children) child rearing practices affect black sport involvement. **Blacks tend to have a higher value toward sport than whites. Blacks' peers and values toward sport would be more important for males than for females. FEMALES RECEIVED MORE INFLUENCE FROM TEACHERS AND SISTERS AND RECEIVE SIMILAR INFLUENCE FROM MOTHERS, FATHERS, AND BROTHERS, HELD SIMILAR VALUES TOWARD SPORT, AND HAD SIMILAR OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE IN SPORT** (as did males).

Alexander (1978) attributed the underrepresentation of black women in sport to a number of factors including lack of money for lessons and equipment, lack of role models, lack of affirmative action on the part of colleges, and lack of available opportunities in geographical areas of minority population concentration. Educators today would argue that there are no problems with opportunities, nor lessons, nor equipment. Yet the low participation numbers exits. Others advocate making sports more fun and less competitive, more skill competence and less win-lose oriented which may increase participation.

One junior high school girl's volleyball coach from Kansas City, Mo., spoke with me about her group of AA females who she tried to coach in volleyball. She would drive to their homes, call their parents, asked their parents for permission, give them bus fare, and even try to bribe them with gifts but they would inevitably quit the team. "They just won't play", she said. There always appeared to be something that would prevent them from participating (behaving) even though they were telling me they wanted to play (attitudes).

DOUBLE WHAMMY

From the literature we see that the Afro-American female is statistically and disproportionately represented and their participation in sports is very low. We see that the Afro-American female population is on an increase in certain areas. Reports show the benefits of physical activity to individuals yet we do not see this group participating. Studies of women show sexism as an issue , others show racism and yet often times these studies are conducted with a population which are not AA females. We know that these findings are true for those populations being studied, however, are they true for AA females of the CNC? Are they the cause for the low participation?

Houzer (1974) stated that "Limitation and discrimination have hindered the rapidly increasing number of black women represented in all sports and employment at all levels of athletic leadership positions. It is because there are no leaders in the Afro-American female lives therefore, there are no followers." This suggests that the Afro-American females need mentors.

The last word may be the best description of AA females. "Black women have to deal with the 'double whammy' --racism and sexism-- particularly in predominantly white institutions" (Abney, & Richey, 1992). Based on the lack of information about participation among Afro-American adolescent females, the purpose of this pilot study was to research and find out which factors would prove that a relationship exist between Afro-American female athletes of south Minneapolis and the amount of their participation.

Based on the lack of information about participation among Afro-American adolescent females, the purpose of this pilot study was to find out if there existed any factors which would show a relationship exist among Afro-American female athletes "Attitudes about participation", and their behavior.

METHODS

Subjects

This study looked at two groups of Afro-American females between the ages of eight and fifteen, with (Group A) having 4 subjects, and (Group B) having 10 subjects. All of the Afro-American female (Adolescent)subjects were from the Central Neighborhood Community.

Group A was taken through a 45 minute taped interview. A series of 28 questions from Questionnaire A were used (see Questionnaire A)**Table VI** The subjects were allowed to speak freely about anything which might influence their playing sports. From the responses given by group A, there were shorter questions established (see Questionnaire B)**Table VII.** Group B was allowed as much time as needed to answer the 7 questions on Questionnaire B. The subjects were not coerced to respond in either direction. Group B used the tape recorder to record their responses.

Procedures I

Both set of responses from the interview were transcribed onto paper. All **responses** which were **alike** were transcribed together. Each group of like responses and answer were **coded** with the proper **category**.

PROCEDURE II

HOW CATEGORIES WERE CHOOSEN

EXAMPLE:
"I like to play sports because it's fun".
"I like playing sports, it gives me something to do".
These answers, or responses were grouped together by categories.

CATEGORY IV
All answers from question **one** and questions **three** were grouped together under **"opinions on participation" Category IV**.

Ex. Question #1 and #3
1. What does it feel like when you play sports?
3. Do you think there are enough Afro-American females playing sports as should be playing sports?

CATEGORY V
All answers from questions two and six were grouped together under **"attitudes". (Category V)**

Ex: Question #2
2 How does playing sports make you feel about yourself?
6 How important is playing sports to you?

CATEGORY II
All answers from questions four were grouped together under **"future in sports participation" (category II)**

Ex: Question #4
4 Should there be more Afro-American females participating? Why?

CATEGORY III

All answers from questions five were grouped together under **"past sports participation" (category III)**

Ex: Question #5
5 Are you satisfied with the number of Afro-American females your own age participating in sports today?

After the categories were made, the tapes were destroyed and all subjects names were kept confidential.

Procedure III

Transcription

The researcher transcribed the responses. Responses were transcribed from the recorded interview . From the transcribed responses the researcher made inferences as to where each response should be placed. Each response that was spoken from the first person; (i.e., I, me, etc.) that was "alike", it was coded on a list. Each time the response occurred on the list, a tally mark was given that response. Afterward the list of responses were placed into categories. The categories were placed on **Table VII**.

Coding alike responses into Categories

Category I was not coded with any particular questions. These comments were general comments about sports concerning family friends and coaches.

Category II was coded with answers from question #4. Category II indicates responses which pertain to their future plans of participation, or not participation.

Category III was coded with answers from question #5. Category III indicates responses which pertain to their past experience as a sports participant, or none participant.

Category IV was coded with answers from question #1 and #3. Category IV indicates responses which were about participation in general.

Category V was coded with answers from question #2 and #6. Category V indicates responses which pertained to their attitudes and opinions about **themselves** participating in sports.

SECOND PILOT GROUP TABULATED LIKE RESPONSES

CATEGORIES

	General	Future	Past	Opinions	Self Part.
	I	II	III	IV	V
A		Wouldn't matter	Not Matter	Not Participate,	NM Happy Enough
B		Feel like doing Good	Yes Bb, Other sports no	Yes Pay More	Prissy Self Esteem
C		Yes	Yes Work,Other	NA Not Enough	NA Not important
D		Yes > people	No	Yes Bb Don't Want to	Be like Fun Learn tobe better
E		yes more involved	No more Opportunities	Fun	Play more Seven
F		DK	DK ask them to play	I like it's It's fun/No	More fun DK
G		Yes, from doing other things	No competion	Like being popular	Get attention
H		Yes, anyone	No, but no hope	Try to be good,Not Enough	Learn basic Skills, 2nd
I		Yes Need Players	No not in this Neighborhood	Iwant to be a Professional	Ok not so
J		Yes,	No not my age	Feels good No	Alright No

Procedures IV

The original list of responses were divided into positive responses, negative response, and responses which were unrelated.

Category I	General Comments	No Tally	Pos. or Neg.	
Category II	Future in Sports	10 Responses	5+	5-
Category III	Past Experiences	10 Responses	3+	7-
Category IV	Opinions on Participation Attitude about Themselves	25 Responses	5+	4-
Category V	Participating in Sports	30 Responses	13+	12-

Statistical Results

Questions #1 & 3, concerning opinions about participation showed 42% Negative and 50% Positive and 8% Not Related Answers.

Question #2 & 6, concerning their attitudes about themselves participating in sports were 43% Positive, 40 % Negative, and 16.6 % Unrelated Answers.

Question #5, concerning Past Experiences yielded twice as many more negative responses as did positive; 70% Negative, and 30% positive.

Question #4, concerning their future chances of participation in sports showed that half thought that they would be participating and the other half believed they would not.

RESULTS

The interviews were transcribed into categories about their family, their past, their future, their participation and their attitude about themselves. First of all, the general comments, or responses about Afro-American females and their families in this group, supported the literature. They received significant support from their family. Family and significant role models influence these girls decision to participate or not participate. Secondly, in their response to previous experiences, often times subjects made significantly more negative comments about their experiences. They talked about how bad things were and how unsuccessful their programs were. They were more often not a part of a winning program. The third category of responses dealt with the girls expectation of continued participation in their chosen sports. Again, there were questionable responses about their future. Half were dissatisfied with future outlook for girls participating in their sport. Only a small percentage gave a positive response to the question" should there be more Afro-American females participating", if so how should this be done? The girls believed their should be more participation but when asked what should be done few had answers and felt like, "I don't know what they can do". However, one female expressed herself quit well and stated that, "these girls need to stop blaming the white folks, and using that for an excuse". Last of all, the attitudes of these girls reflected a positive attitude about participation, and would continue to play.

Clearly we see two major themes which emerged from this study. The first being one of self confidence, in their ability to play the game. The second theme is the absence of confidence in their inner selves. This type of self image was also expressed when asked about the possibilities of being successful, or getting better. When asked about themselves they usually made positive statements, however they were not about their self image. Statements about themselves were unsure and directed toward how others compared to their skills. This group made comments directed at the deserter to "call the shots" (be in control), "get more attention", others being "scared to play" and "other girls bragging", "not liking it when.....", things don't go their way, or "it's more popular to be a good fighter" (not sports). Their statements were directed towards winning and loosing. Also, these comments were relative to how they perceived themselves, or how others saw them. If the girls had being on winning teams they had positive comments, and if they had been associated with loosing then they had negative comments about their situation. One subject stated it was more fun to play and loose than to win and sit the bench. Another, stated it was fun to play cause you get more attention. Their we see comments about how playing feels but not how they felt inside about themselves. Apparently winning and loosing was important. But more importantly was what happened to get to those results.

DISCUSSION

If Afro-American females in this group want to be successful then they must always win, play a lot, and be attractive or fight well. From the results one can see that these athletes are interested in being successful, skilled, and continuing in sports. On the other hand they are faced with the discrepancy between what appears to be successful (winning / loosing) and appearances, and what success really is. Their picture of success continues to be based on beliefs from outward appearances and not what is with in themselves. This explains how emphasis on one area has detracted from the participation rate of AA females. As long as they feel like success is measured in winning and loosing, attractive and unattractive, or popularity and unpopular then they will continue to just play the game with out much internal hope of success.

These comments supported the notion that these athletes motivation is directed from with in by situations on the outside. If they participate where they win then they feel good about themselves, and vice versa. A higher value was placed on what others felt and less about felt. With this group self image became the underlining factor ..."they trying to be cute":.."they think they too good to play"..."they think thy're better than you are"..."boys ain't better" ..."I don't like to play against them cause they be trying to show off".

It was observed that couple girls who were not so concerned about appearances had a more realistic view of sports participation and themselves. On the whole, most of their comments were directed toward how they felt about themselves, in relations to how they performed against others. In reality this underlying attitude reflects a "lack of self confidence" in their own ability. The self image of these girls appears to be derived from what those around them think. They are more interested in their own appearance and how they are perceived by others, than anything else. Based on these statements it could be concluded that participation of Afro-American female athletes in this group are somehow related to their self-image.

This lead the researcher to believe that factors which influences AA females participation in sports are relative to how the female perceives herself as a female. The literature did not address issues around AA females attitudes. Perhaps from this group their attitude about participation has two meaning. The meaning of participation for this group could be partially wrapped up in their appearances (self image), and also wrapped up in success (win lost).

These athletes stated they don't want to be "treated like boys", "or differently", or "yelled at". These girls want to feel good about themselves when they play and often this dose not happen. This group of girls express a need to have their self image; ego stroked and allow competition success and loses to be equated.

Findings

Factors which influence participation within this group varied. Some of the results found that attitudes were not a factor in deciding to participate in sports within this group. Results did find that **attitudes about themselves participating in sports were not very strong or positive.** Results showed this group felt positive about sports in general. They expressed willingness to work long, and hard hours. They stated that they felt qualified. They put a **great amount of emphasis on having fun and what the outcome of the game meant for them as well as for others around them.** Some of their comments found that, how they have been treated, the amount of opportunities available , and taking advantage of what is already available, were also factors which influenced participation in sports with this group.

It was not found if they felt that they received adequate support from their significant role models. Some of the females in the group saw themselves as not being treated equal. When asked why they don't take advantage of opportunities some felt there were not enough available.

There attitudes were over all positive about capabilities. But they didn't express positive opinions about their self image, at best it was ambiguous. Some of them were not sure about their future but saw themselves as being good qualified and capable of participating. The discrepancy occurred when they made positive statements about participate but how would they deal with being caught up in their appearances and self image? **They were not able to objectify their status as athletes.** Nor were they clear about the difference between success and failure verses self image.

While some of the literature supported the findings, some were also in opposition to each other. Specifically on the issue of socialization, it was found that socialization into sports is a factor for Afro-American female athletes. However, being socialized into sports assumes that the sport is first, available and all other things are equal. With AA all things considered, are not equal. Studies conducted on AA females in Illinois can not be compared to AA females in the CNC. The study conducted on subjects from the Midwest does not adequately represent AA from a different geographical and social background. In this study, subjects completed a fixed alternative questionnaire. When one looks at the responses of these Afro American children this gives a better understanding as to the magnitude of factors which influence their participation. Although this was an isolated study, Greendorfer, and Ewings made interesting findings. Some of these findings can be generalized to AA females, yet we need to do more specific, purposeful studies with AA females population.

When sport is no longer fun or they are not the best most popular, well treated athlete then they feel unsuccessful. Is this the cause of the low participation or are these just excuses to sabotage opportunities because they haven't built their self image contradicts their idea of success?

Table I. Total Afro-American Population and Number of Teens Age 10-15 Years in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Minneapolis Census Report, 1990).

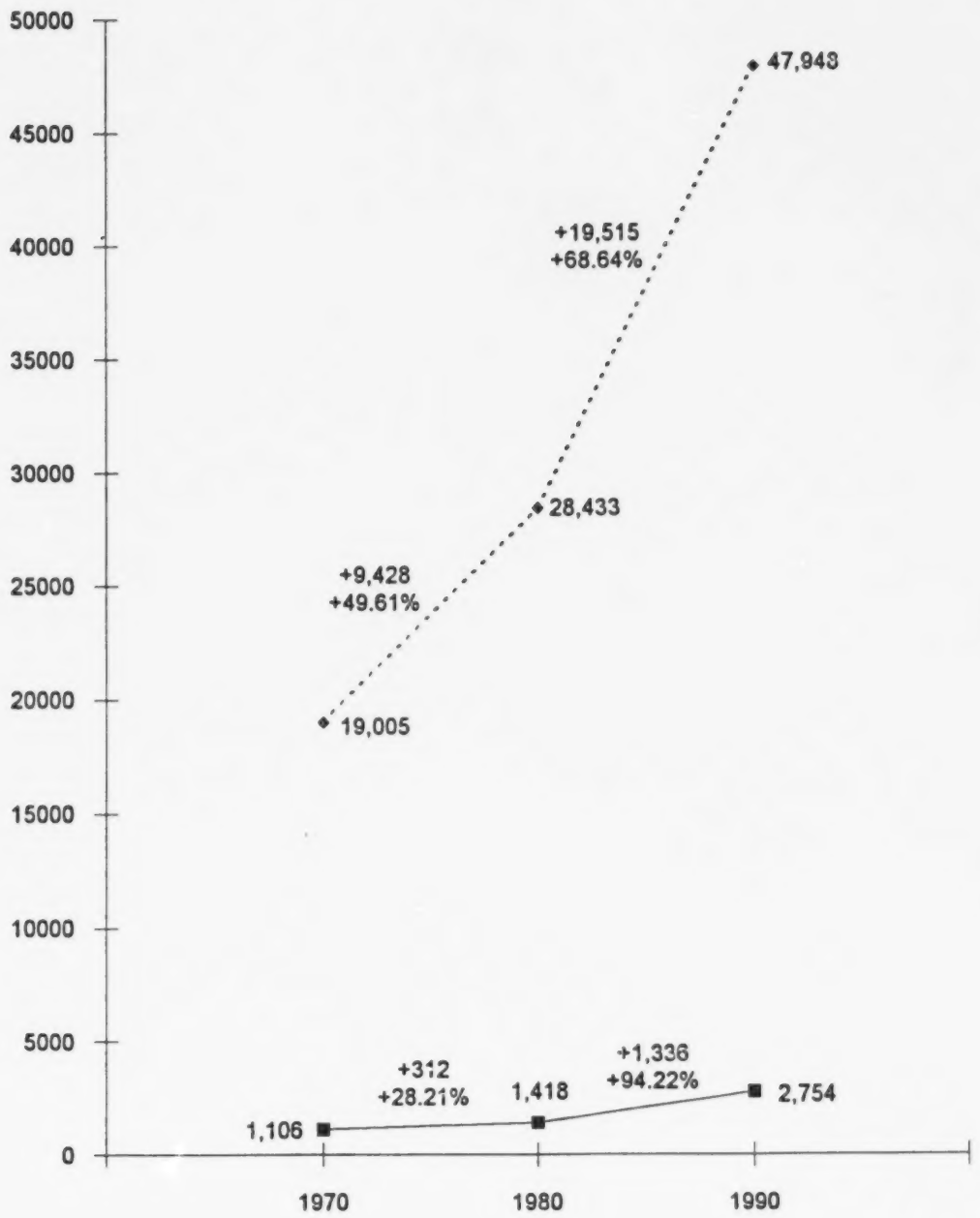


Table II. Total Female Enrollment, Four Quarters, University of Minnesota (Registrar's Office).

	1974	1980	1990
Total Enrollment	16,528	20,700	19,021

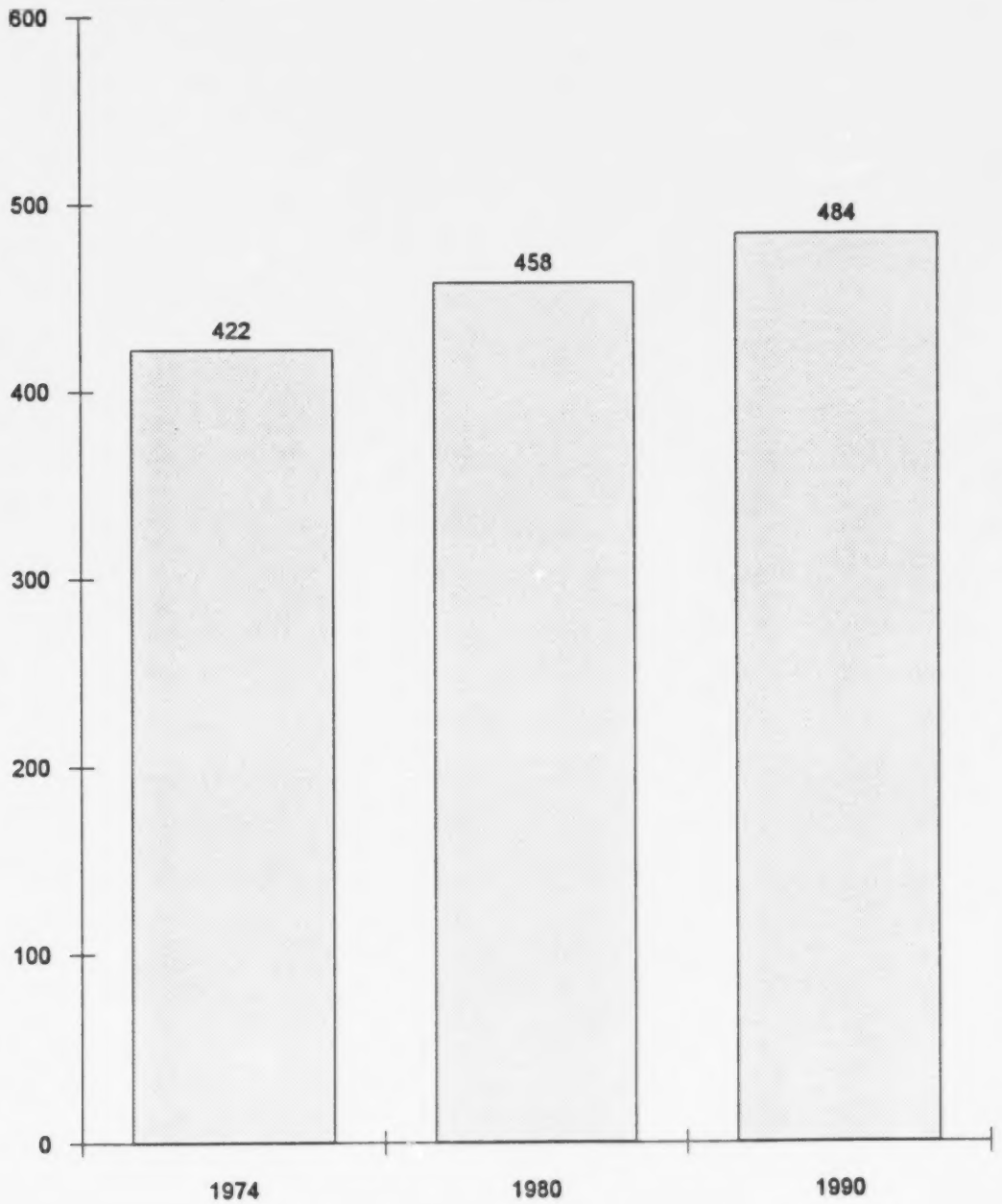
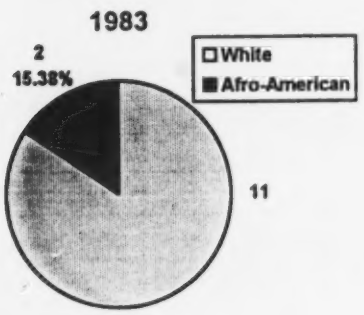
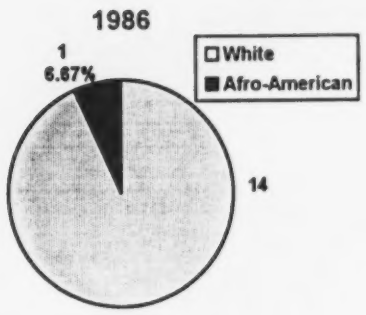
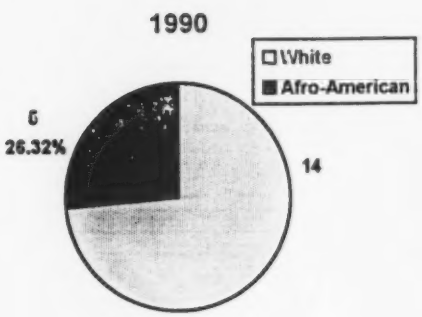


Table III. Afro-American Female Athletes, Basketball and Track, University of Minnesota*

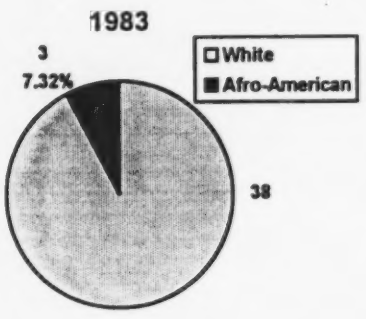
Basketball

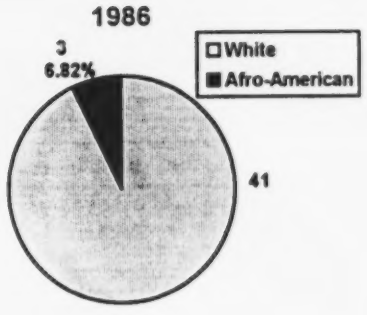


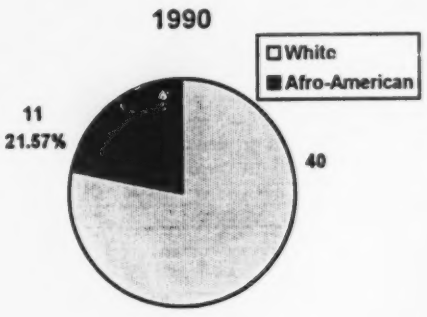




Track







*There were no Afro-American female athletes in either softball or volleyball.

Table IV. AAU League, 1990

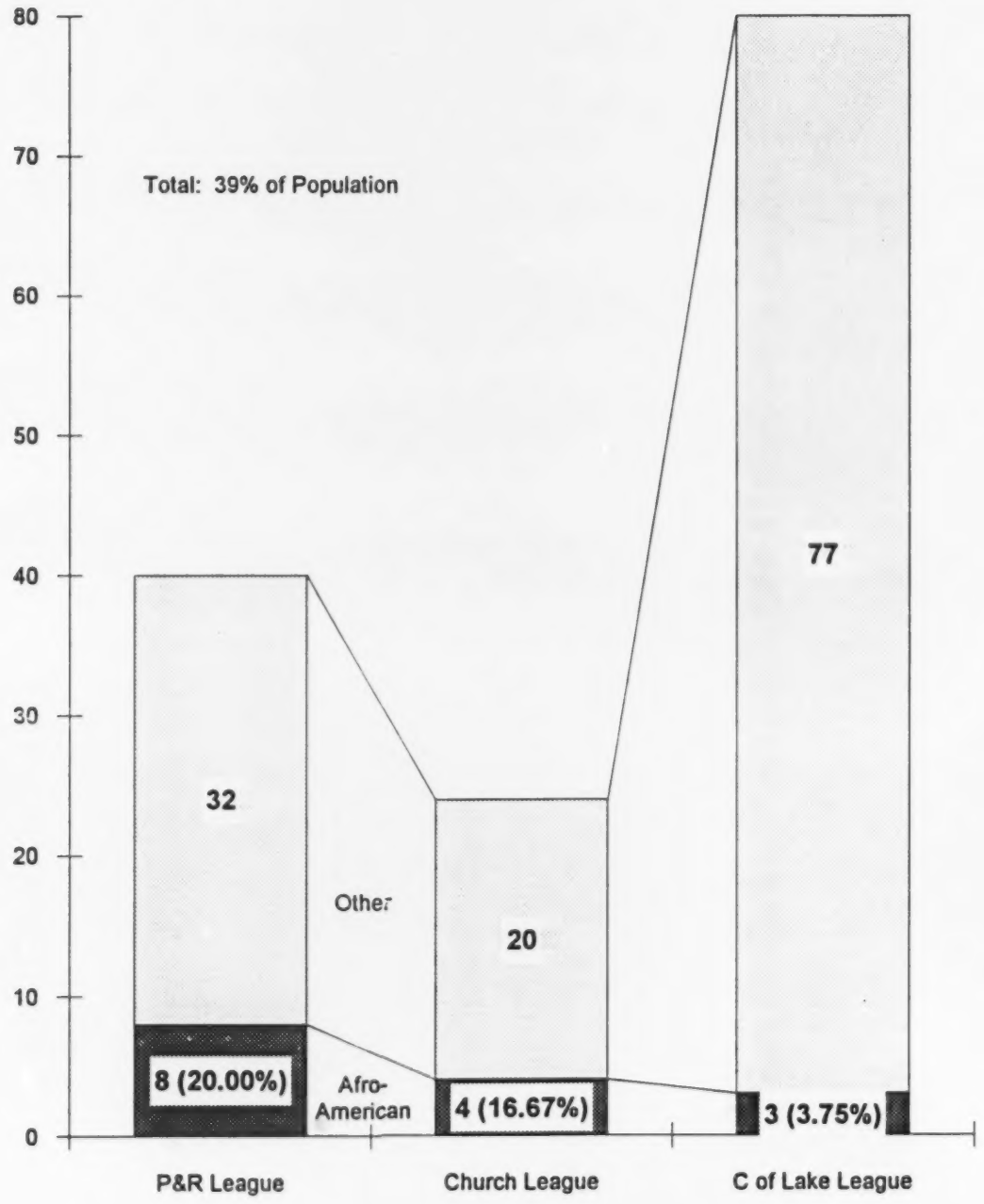


Table V USA TODAY

Results from Newspaper Article December 16 - 20

1) "Blacks have fewer opportunities for advancement and are therefore more likely to aim for a professional sports carreer" 65% of total agreed, and 35% disagreed

2) "Blacks are willing to work harder to succeed in sports" 60% of total agreed, and 38% disagreed

3) "Coaches tend to put white at certain positions and blacks at others because they stereotype athletes by race. 30% of total agreed, and 67% of total disagreed.

4) Blacks and whites respondents agree blacks are "faster runners", and excel in physical tasks - whites are slow, leaders, and thinkers, - whites abandon sports in which blacks are perceived as successful.

5) Energies of black athltetes are channeled to so few sports or specific positions in teams that the over all opportunities for whites, for college shcolarship or pro careers still vastly outnumber those of blacks.

6) White exception of baseball "Caucasians only" rules remain virtually as white as they ever were.

SECOND PILOT GROUP TABULATED LIKE RESPONSES

CATEGORIES

	General	Future	Past	Opinions	Self Part.
	I	II	III	IV	V
A		Wouldn't matter	Not Matter	Not Participate,	NM Happy Enough
B		Feel like doing Good	Yes Bb, Other sports no	Yes Pay More	Prissy Self Esteem
C		Yes	Yes Work,Other	NA Not Enough	NA Not important
D		Yes > people	No	Yes Bb Don't Want to	Be like Fun Learn tobe better
E		yes more involved	No more Opportunities	Fun	Play more Seven
F		DK	DK ask them to play	I like it's It's fun/No	More fun DK
G		Yes, from doing other things	No competion	Like being popular	Get attention
H		Yes, anyone	No, but no hope	Try to be good,Not Enough	Learn basic Skills, 2nd
I		Yes Need Players	No not in this Neighborhood	Iwant to be a Professional	Ok not so
J		Yes,	No not my age	Feels good No	Alright No

TABLE VII

DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY

RESEARCH OVER THE INTERVIEWS OF AFRO AMERICAN FEMALE ATHLETES BETWEEN THE AGES OF EIGHT AND FOURTEEN ON THEIR OPINIONS CONCERNING FEMALES AND BASKETBALL OR OTHER SPORT ACTIVITIES.

FROM THE HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE

VERONICA FRANKLIN HAS PERMISSION TO USE MY RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY.

---

1. DO YOU OR SOME OTHER FEMALE YOU KNOW PLAY SPORTS?
2. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT IT IS GOOD FOR GIRLS TO PLAY SPORTS.
3. WHO WAS YOUR BEST COACH?
4. WHY?
5. DO YOUR PARENTS OR CLOSE FRIENDS OR SIBLINGS PLAY SPORTS?
6. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN A GAME?
7. IS IT MORE FUN TO WATCH BASKETBALL OR PLAY?
8. HOW HARD IS IT TO BE GOOD IN BASKETBALL?
9. CAN ANYONE PLAY BASKETBALL?

10. WHO ARE THE BEST FEMALE ATHLETES YOU KNOW IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD?

    ARE THEY VERY POPULAR WITH THE OTHER GIRLS?

    WHY?

    WHY NOT ?

11. HOW GOOD OF AN ATHLETE ARE YOU?

12. WOULD YOU WORK HARD FOR LONG HOURS WHILE IT WAS HOT, WHEN YOU WERE TIRED, AFTER SCHOOL, OR WHEN NO ONE WAS WATCHING JUST TO BE GOOD AT ANY SPORTS TEAM?

13. DO YOUR PARENTS LET YOU PLAY SPORTS?

14. DO THEY ENCOURAGE YOU TO PLAY SPORTS?

15. DO YOU HAVE VERY MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN TO PLAY SPORTS OR PRACTICE?

16 WHAT OTHER SPORTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY?

17. HAVE YOU EVER PLAYED ON A TEAM ?

18. WHAT DID YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR TEAM?

19. WHAT DID YOU DISLIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR TEAM?

20. IF YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD MAKE MONEY PLAYING SPORTS WOULD YOU START TRYING TODAY?

21. WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO GET READY?

22. WOULD YOU EVER WANT TO GO TO THE OLYMPICS AND COMPETE FOR A GOLD MEDAL?

23. DO YOU KNOW ANY WOMEN WHO WILL PARTICIPATE FOR A MEDAL AT THE 92 SUMMER OLYMPICS?

24. DO YOU HAVE ANY POSITIVE ROLE MODELS?

25. ARE THEY FEMELE ATHLETES?

26. WHY? OR WHY NOT?

27. IF GIVEN THE CHANCE WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO GET MORE YOUNG FEMALES ACTIVE IN SPORTS?

TABLE VIII

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AFRO AMERICAN FEMALE ADOLESCENTS: OPINIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION.

1. What does it feel like when you play sports?

2. How does playing sports make you feel good about yourself?

3. Do you think there are enough Afro-American female playing sports as should be playing sports?

   Why?

   Why not?

4. Should there be more Afro-American females participating?

   Why?

   Why not?

5. Are you satisfied with the number of Afro-American females your own age participating in sports today?

6. How important Is playing sports to you?

7. What is more important than playing sports? PLEASE RANK YOUR ANSWERS

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